



DIALOGUES IN RHYTHM

Paul Hofmann – piano
with Tommy Ruskin – drums

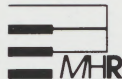
PAUL HOFMANN *piano*
with **TOMMY RUSKIN** *drums*

- | | |
|-----------------|------|
| 1. PROLOGUE | 5:27 |
| 2. ENIGMA | 4:29 |
| 3. SWAGGER | 8:04 |
| 4. MEMORABILIA | 6:54 |
| 5. CRAZY THIRDS | 3:08 |
| 6. PATTERNS | 7:17 |
| 7. INTERLUDE | 1:43 |
| 8. BLUES | 5:55 |
| 9. DIGRESSION | 5:00 |
| 10. TEXTURES | 9:54 |
| 11. LAUGHTER | 3:09 |
| 12. EPILOGUE | 5:16 |

All compositions by Paul Hofmann / Tommy Ruskin (PBH Music BMI)

Dialogues in Rhythm

CD-20



Produced by Paul Hofmann

Recorded December 28, 2009
at Soundtrek Studio I, Kansas City, MO

Engineered by Ron Ubel
and Justin Wilson

COMPACT
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DIGITAL AUDIO

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Total Time — 66:15



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Engineered by Ron Ubel and Justin Wilson

Digital editing by Justin Wilson

Art direction and design by Keith Kavanaugh

Manufactured in U.S.A. by BauWau Design

Paul Hofmann was born in Buffalo, New York in 1962. His parents were Paul's first piano teachers, and he went on to study at the National Music Camp (Interlochen, Michigan) and at the Eastman School of Music, where he now serves as chairman of the Community Music School jazz department. At ECMS Paul teaches private composition and jazz piano, as well as a variety of jazz classes and improvisation workshops. Paul is fortunate to have numbered among his students some of the best young jazz pianists and composers in the world, including Chris Ziemba for eight wonderful years.

Paul has performed and recorded with many of the finest musicians. In addition to Hofmann's recording for Sons of Sound Productions (appearing on "Escapade," "Interconnection," "Fallen Angel" and "Out of the Darkness" with guitarist Bob Sneider), Paul is represented as composer on vocalist Kevin Mahogany's "Double Rainbow" (Enja Records), "Kevin Mahogany Big Band" (Zebra Records/Mahogany Jazz) and on the Frank Mantooth Jazz Orchestra's "A Miracle" (Sea Breeze Records), as pianist on "The Kansas City Boulevard Big Band" (Sea Breeze), and in both roles on Mike Melito's "Bout Time!," "My Conception" (both on MHR Records) and "In The Tradition." In 2010 Paul and Bob released a third acclaimed duo disc (Origin Records) entitled "Serve and Volley." Hofmann is also featured as composer, arranger and performer on "Nocturne for Ava," the latest Bob Sneider-Joe Locke film noir project (Origin).

Since 1991, MHR has been a primary outlet for Paul's piano playing and composing. The seventeen digital projects released to date have consisted of everything from solo piano performances to duets to jazz trio, quartet and quintet arrangements, and have featured exceptional sidemen (including many highly-regarded jazz artists).

Drummer Tommy Ruskin has enjoyed a distinguished career, having played with jazz greats Zoot Sims, Al Cohn, Clark Terry, Scott Hamilton and Gene Harris (among many others). For twenty years, Ruskin has been highly involved with both the Topeka and Kansas City Jazz Workshops. Tommy lives and works in Kansas City, where he and his wife, vocalist Julie Turner, have long been mainstays of KC's jazz community.

Paul thanks Tommy for his fabulous playing, Julie for taking such good care of Tommy, David Turner for the photos, Ron for another great Soundtrek session, Chris for preparing for the next one (!), Justin for his superb engineering, Keith for a great package, John Beck for his kindnesses over the years (and for his kind words here), Mike Melito for his friendship and helpful comments, all my Eastman students, and Sarah for being the best daughter in the world.

Tommy thanks Paul for asking me to do this project and for getting a chance to play with him again, and my wife Julie for her undying support and love over the last 47 years.

*"When you improvise, it is axiomatic that you take risks
and can't foretell results...[t]hat is its charm."*

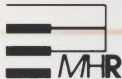
AARON COPLAND (1949)

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Dialogues in Rhythm

PAUL HOFMANN piano
with TOMMY RUSKIN drums

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Dialogues in Rhythm

by

John Beck

Professor Emeritus of Percussion

Eastman School of Music

Musical improvisation is the outward expression of internal desire. To the improviser, what one ‘thinks’ is expressed in the language of music. “Dialogues in Rhythm” exemplifies this description to the fullest extent of its meaning.

Paul Hofmann and Tommy Ruskin have a lot to say. Here their many years of music making have helped create an album filled with listening pleasure. At times these performances are searching and introspective; sometimes classical in nature; sometimes swinging, sometimes cool; but always musical.

Paul is both an accomplished pianist and composer. Throughout this program he uses his compositional talent to create improvisations which flatter his piano skills while setting musical moods for Tommy Ruskin’s imaginative drumming. These moods are not “you play, I’ll play” events but integrate musical phrases and rhythms that are enhanced by the ability of each

player to listen carefully. Thus, the spontaneous collaboration which happens between Paul and Tommy would never happen again in precisely the same way.

Tommy’s sensitivity, rhythmic stability and ability to swing in any style – coupled with his excellent drum set sound – all provide a rhythmic pallet for Paul’s pianistic ideas. While Tommy never gets in the way of Paul’s melodic material, he always adds rhythmic interest to it. This is not something all drummers can do; but Tommy has mastered this ability and it enriches the results of this album.

“Dialogues in Rhythm” is an excellent recording sure to capture the attention of any music lover, whether classical or jazz. Here the talents of Paul Hofmann and Tommy Ruskin have provided the listener with over an hour of enjoyable music. The journey from the *Prologue* to the *Epilogue* is well worth the trip.

These duets were entirely improvised over a few hours of recording one memorable day in Kansas City. Part jazz and classical piano, part jazz drums...perhaps the most accurate label for this music might be 'chamber jazz.' Whatever the category, this is one of the most musically satisfying projects I've ever been involved with.

As much as I enjoy writing and arranging, a big part of me has always loved the risky adventure of improvisation. (Those *Crazy Thirds*, for instance...) Apart from the track *Blues* (our one attempt to interpret a traditional harmonic sequence), there was nothing pre-planned; Tommy and I simply sat down and played. Fortunately, from the start we were so on the same musical wavelength that virtually all of what we recorded ended up being included as part of this 66-minute suite.

Tommy Ruskin has long been one of my favorite drummers, ever since we met in the early 1990s when we both lived and worked in Kansas City. During this time we regularly proceeded to make music together, on recordings and for various club dates – including a memorable Nebraska quartet gig with Kevin Mahogany broadcast on public television.

Dig Tommy's street beats on *Swagger* and

Blues. During *Swagger*, his unexpected reference to Vernel Fournier's famous *Poinciana* beat was something I smiled at (and fortunately picked up on). And Tommy's sympathetic playing on such tracks as *Memorabilia* and *Textures* is uniquely creative. It's no wonder so many people, including Stan Getz, have admired his playing over the years.

Throughout, there are many examples of our latching onto short rhythmic riffs as the basis for the ad-libs which follow. Even in the quieter, more reflective pieces, the glue which tends to hold everything together is the rhythmic content. Hence, the title: "Dialogues in Rhythm." I think that's an apt description of this music, on several levels.

Many of our tracks begin with solo piano explorations which then lead into Tommy's imaginative drumming. At various places in this music you'll hear Tommy utilizing everything from sticks to mallets to brushes, and even using his hands on the drum heads, all in the service of the music. It was great fun having such meaningful dialogues with Tommy, and we both hope you enjoy listening as much as we enjoyed creating these new musical worlds.

Paul Hofmann

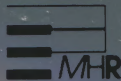
PAUL HOFMANN
with **TOMMY RUSKIN**

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*Dialogues
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